



NEWS RELEASE

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SBA HONORS NATION'S TOP ENTREPRENEURS DURING SMALL BUSINESS WEEK: MAY 23 – 29

National "Small Business Person of the Year" To Be Announced

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) will honor America's top entrepreneurs – and name the 1999 National Small Business Person of the Year – next week during ceremonies in Washington, D.C. marking national Small Business Week. The recognition comes at a time when small business creation is booming and the economy is the best in decades.

Communities across the nation have been holding events and selecting local winners in anticipation of Small Business Week, which officially runs from May 23 to 29. The theme for this year's celebration, "*A History of Success, A Millennium of Opportunity*," honors the entrepreneurs who have helped create one of the most well balanced economies in U.S. history.

"The history of small business is an economic success story of magnificent proportions and the future holds even more promise for a millennium of opportunity," said SBA Administrator Aida Alvarez. **"As we enter the 21st century, we should take time to reflect on the role small businesses have historically played in keeping our country's economy running smoothly and prosperously."**

The SBA is planning a three-day recognition ceremony in the nation's capital, from May 23 to 25. For many state Small Business Week winners, it's the culmination of a hectic month filled with local and state honors. The SBA ceremony, to be held at the Renaissance Washington Hotel, will feature award ceremonies, exhibits, and discussions of issues seen as vital to the small business community.

"During Small Business Week here in Washington," said Administrator Alvarez, **"the SBA is proud to honor the men and women whose entrepreneurial successes and personal achievements helped create jobs and helped communities grow. They truly deserve this recognition."**

Every president for 36 years has issued an annual proclamation celebrating Small Business Week. The festivities in Washington include the naming of a national *Small Business Person of the Year*. The national winner is selected from 53 state Small Business Persons of the Year – one from each state, plus the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and Guam.

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Small Business Advocates are also honored. These awards recognize individuals who have been advocates of minority-owned, women-owned and veteran-owned small businesses. In addition, the awards go to media, accounting and financial services representatives who contribute to small business development.

In the special awards category, the *Phoenix Awards* recognize a public official, a business owner and a volunteer whose efforts and contributions enabled their business or community to recover following a national disaster. The SBA gives this award as part of its role as the nation's banker in times of disaster for homeowners, renters and businesses of all sizes.

The *Welfare-to-Work Awards* will be presented to a former welfare recipient who is now a self-supporting entrepreneur and to individuals who have contributed to the Welfare-to-Work initiative.

Additional special awards honor the *SBA Young Entrepreneur of the Year*, *Small Business Exporter of the Year*, and the *SBA Entrepreneurial Success Award* winner. The latter award is presented to a company that has developed into a large business with SBA assistance. Past winners of this award include Callaway Golf Co., Ruiz Food Products Inc., and New York Bagel Enterprises.

State award winners and recipients of the advocate and special awards are nominated by local trade associations, chambers of commerce and business organizations.

During Small Business Week, the winners meet with top administration officials, members of Congress and leaders of national business organizations.

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*For more information on Small Business Week and a complete list of award winners, visit the SBA's Small Business Week Web site at <http://smallbusinesssuccess.sba.gov>. Additional information about SBA programs and services is available at SBA's Web site: <http://www.sba.gov>. Or call the **SBA Answer Desk** at **1-800-U-ASK- SBA**.*

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